32

The two last Speeches of *Thomas Wentworth*, late Earle of *Strafford*, and Deputy of *Ireland*.

The one in the Tower, the other on the Scaffold on Tower-hill, *May* the 12th 1641.

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16

New revised by the perfectest Coppy, with some Additions, *which was formerly omitted.*

LONDON:

His ſpeech in the Tower to the Lords, before he went to execution.

RIght Honourable, and the reſt, you are now come to convey mee to my death, I am willing to dye, which is a thing no more than all our Predeceſſors have done, and a debt that our Poſteritie muſt in their due time diſcharge, which ſince it can be no way avoyded, it ought the leſſe to be feared: for that which is common to all, ought not to be intollerable to any: It is the Law of Nature, the tribute of the fleſh, a remedy from all worldly cares and troubles; and to the truly penitent, a perfect path to bleſſedneſſe. And there is but one death, though ſeverall wayes unto it: mine is not naturall, but enforced by the Law and Juſtice: it hath beene ſayd that the Lawes vex only the meaner ſort of people, but the mightie are able to withſtand them: it is not ſo with me, for to the Law I ſubmit my ſelfe, and confeſſe that I receive nothing but juſtice: for hee that politikely intendeth good to a Common-weale, may be called a juſt man, but hee that practiſeth either for his owne profit, or any other ſiniſter ends, may be well termed a delinquent perſon; neither is delay in puniſhment any privilege for pardon. And moreover, I ingenuouſly confeſſe with *Cicero*, That the death of the bad is the ſafetie of the good that be alive.

Let no man truſt eyther in the favour of his Prince, the friendſhip and conſanguinity of his Peeres, muchleſſe in his owne wiſdome and knowledge, of which I ingenuouſly confeſſe I have beene too confident. Kings, as they are men before God, ſo they are Gods before men, and I may ſay with a great man once in this Kingdome, *Had I ſtrived to obey my God*

God as faithfully, as I ſought to honour my King diligently, I had ſtood, and not fallen. Moſt happie and fortunate is that Prince, who is as much feared, as for his goodneſſe beloved: For the greater that Princes are in power above other, the more they ought in vertue to excell other; and ſuch is the royall Soveraigne whom I late ſerved.

For my Peeres, the correſpondence that I had with them during my proſperitie, was to mee very delightfull and pleaſing, and here they have commiſerated my ruine, I have plentifully found, who (for the moſt generous of them) I may boldly ſay, though they have deteſted the fact, yet they have pitied the perſon delinquent; the firſt in their loyaltie, the laſt in their charitie: ingenuouſly confeſſing, that never any ſubject, or peere of my rank, had ever that help of Counſell, that benefit of time, or a more free and legall tryall than I have had: in the like whereof, none of my preceſſors hath had ſo much favour from his prince, ſo much ſufferance from the people; in which I comprehend the underſtanding Commons, not the many headed monſter, Multitude: But I have offended, am ſentenced, and muſt now ſuffer.

And for my too much confidence in my ſuppoſed wiſdom and knowledge, therein have beene the moſt deceived: For hee is wiſe to himſelfe, that knowes by others faults to correct his owne offences: to be truly wiſe is to be Secretaries to our ſelves; for it is meere folly to reveale our intimate thoughts to ſtrangers: wiſdome is the moſt precious Gem with which the mind can be adorned, and learning the moſt famous thing for which a man ought to bee eſteemed, and true wiſdome teacheth us to doe well, as to ſpeake well: in the firſt I have failed, for *the wiſdome of man is fooliſhneſſe with God.*

For knowledge, it is a thing indifferent both to good and evil, but the beſt knowledge is for a man to know himſelfe; hee that doth ſo, ſhal eſteeme of himſelfe but little, for hee conſidereth from whence he came, and wherto he muſt go, he

regardeth not the vaine pleaſures of this life, hee exalteth God, and ſtrives to live in his feare ; but he that knoweth not himſelfe, is wilful in his owne wayes, unprofitable in his life, unfortunate in his death, and ſo am I. But the reaſon why I ſought to attaine unto it, was this: I have read that he that knoweth not that which he ought to know, is a Bruit beaſt amongſt men: hee that knoweth more than hee ought to know, is a man amongſt beaſts: but hee that knoweth all that may be knowne, is a God amongſt men. To this I much aſpired, in this I much failed; *Vanitie of vanities, all is but vanitie.*

I have heard the people clamour and cry out, ſaying, That through my occaſion the times are bad. I wiſh that when I am dead they may prove better: moſt true it is, that there is at this time a great ſtorme impending (God in his mercie avert it.) And ſince it is my particular lot, like *Jonah*, to bee caſt into the ſea, I ſhall think my life well ſpent, to appeaſe Gods wrath, and ſatisfie the peoples malice.

O what is eloquence more than aire? faſhioned with an articulate and diſtinct ſound, when it is a ſpeciall vertue to ſpeake little and well, and ſilence is oft the beſt oratorie; for fooles in their dumbneſſe may bee accounted wiſe: It hath power to make a good matter ſeeme bad and a bad cauſe appeare good: but mine was to mee unprofitable, and like the Cypreſſe trees, which are great and tall, but altogether without fruit.

What is honour? but the firſt ſtep to diſquietneſſe, and power is ſtill waited on by envie, neither hath it any privilege againſt infamie. It is held to be the chiefe part of honor, for a man to joyne to his office and calling, curteſie and affabilitie, commiſeration and pitie: for thereby he draweth to him with a kind of compulſion, the hearts of the multitude. But that was the leaſt part of my ſtudy, which now makes me call to mind, that the greater the perſons are in authority, the ſooner they are catcht in any delinquencie, and their

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ſmalleſt crimes are thought to bee capitall, the ſmalleſt ſpot ſeemes great in the finneſt linnen, and the leaſt flaw is ſooneſt found in the richeſt Diamond. But high and noble ſpirits finding themſelves wounded, grieve not ſo much at their owne paine and perplexitie, as at the deriſion and ſcoſs of their enemy : but for mine owne part, though I might have many in my life, I hope to finde none in my death.

Amongſt other things which pollute and contaminate the mindes of great ſpirits, there is none more heinous than Ambition, which is ſeldome unaccompanyed with Avarice: Such, to poſſeſſe their ends, care not to violate the Lawes of Religion, and Reaſon, and to breake the bonds of Modeſty and equity, with the neareſt tyes of Conſanguinity, and Amity; of which as I have beene guilty, ſo I craye at Gods hands forgiveneſſe. It is a Maxime in Philoſophy, that ambitious men can bee never good Counſellours to Princes; the deſire of having more is common to great Lords, and a deſire of Rule a great cauſe of their Ruine.

My Lords, I am now the hopeleſſe Preſident, may I bee to you all an happy example: For Ambition devoureth gold, and drinketh bloud, and climbeth ſo high by other mens heads, that at the length in the fall it breaketh its own neck: therefore it is better to live in humble content, than in high care and trouble : For more precious is want with honeſty, than wealth with infamy: For what are wee but meere vapours, which in a ſerene Element aſcend high, and upon an inſtant, like Smoak, vaniſh into nothing : or like Ships without Pilots, toſt up and downe upon the Seas by contrary winds and tempeſts. But the good husbandman thinks better of thoſe eares of Corne, which bow downe, and grow crooked, than thoſe which are ſtreight and upright, becauſe he is aſſured to finde more ſtore of graine in the one than in the other. This all men know, yet of this, how few make uſe: The defect whereof muſt be now my paine: may my ſuffering prove to others profit.

For what hath now the favour of my Prince, the familiarity with my Peeres, the volubility of a tongue, the ſtrength of my memory, my learning, or knowledge, my honours, or Offices, my power, and potency, my riches, and treaſure, (all theſe the eſpeciall gifts, both of Nature, and Fortune) what have all theſe profited mee? Bleſſings I acknowledge, though by God beſtowed upon man; yet not all of them together upon many: yet by the Divine providence, the moſt of them met in me: of which had I made happy uſe, I might ſtill have flouriſht, who now am forc'd immaturely to fall.

I now could wiſh, (but that *utinam* is too late) that God with his outward goodneſſe towards mee had ſo commixed his inward grace, that I had chuſed the *mediam* path, neither inclining to the right hand, nor deviating to the left; but like *Icarus* with my waxen wings, fearing by too low a flight to moyſten them with the Waves: I ſoared too high, and too neare the Sunne, by which they being melted; I aymming at the higheſt, am precipitated to the loweſt: and am made a wretched prey to the Waters: But I who before built my houſe upon the the ſand, have now ſetled my hopes upon the Rock my Saviour: by whoſe onely merits my ſole truſt is, that whatſoever becomes of my body, yet in this boſome my ſoule may be Sanctuaried.

Nimrod would have built a Tower to reach up to heaven, and cald it *Babel*; but God turned it to the confuſion of Languages, and diſſipation of the people. *Pharaoh* kept the Children of *Iſrael* in bondage, and after having freed them, in his great pride would have made them his prey; but God gave them a drie and miraculous paſſage, and *Pharaoh* and his hoaſt a watrie Sepulcher. *Belſhazzer* feaſted his Princes and Proſtitutes, who drunke healths in the Veſſells taken from the Temple, but the hand of God writ upon the wall, *Mene, Tekel, Phorat*, and that night before morning was both his Kingdome and life taken from him: Thus God lets

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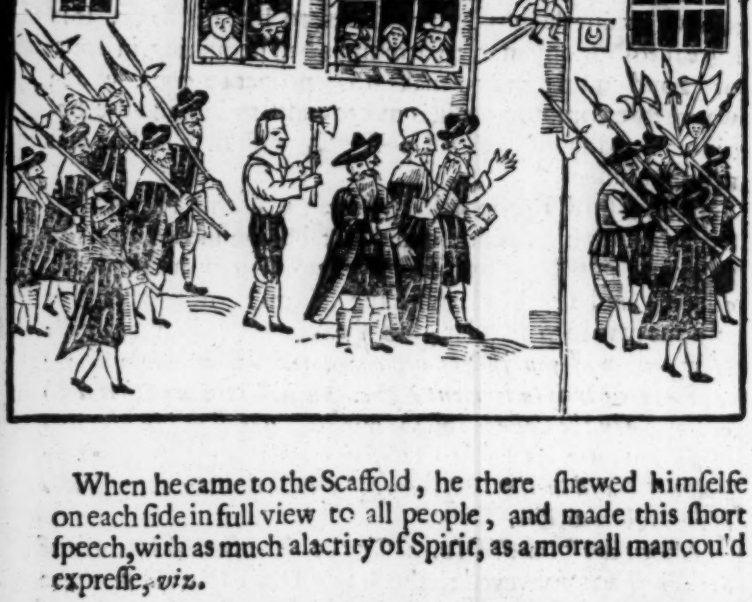
men goe on a great while in their owne devices, but in the end it proved their own ruine and destruction, never suffering them to effect their desired purposes; therefore let none presume upon his power, glory in his greatnesse, or bee too confident in his riches: These things were written for our Instruction, of which the living may make use, the dying cannot; but wit and unfruitfull wisedome are the next neighbours to folly.

There can bee no greater vanity in the world, than to esteeme the world, which regardeth no man; and to make slight account of God who greatly respecteth all men; and there can bee no greater folly in man, than by much Travell to increase his goods, and pamper his body, and in the interim with vaine delights and pleasures, to lose his soule. It is a great folly in any man to attempt a bad beginning, in hope of a good ending; and to make that proper to one, which was before common to all, is meere indiscretion, and the beginning of discord, which I positively wish may end in this my punishment.

O how small a proportion of earth will containe my body, when my high minde could not be confined within the spacious compasse of two Kingdomes? But my houre draweth on, and I conclude with the Psalmist, not aymimg at any one man in particular, but speaking for all in generall: *How long will you Judges bee corrupted? how long will yee cease to give true Iudgement? &c. Blessed is the man that doth not walke in the Councell of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornfull, therefore they shall not stand in the Iudgement, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous, &c.*

About the houre of 10. a Clocke the aforesaid Lord of *Strafford* was conveyed to the Scaffold on Tower-Hill, where was a Court of Guard made by the severall Companies of Souldiers of the City of *London*, and the Hamlets of the Tower on each side as he passed to the Scaffold: before mar-

ched the Marſhalls men to make way, then the Sheriffes of Londons Officers with their Halberds; after them the Kings Guard, or warders of the Tower: Next came one of his Gentlemen, bare headed, in mourning Habit, the Lord *Strafford* following him clad in blacke cloath, with divers others in the ſame habit, which were his attendance; then the Lord Biſhop of *Armagh*, and other good Divines; with the Sheriffes of London, and divers honourable parſonages.



When he came to the Scaffold, he there ſhewed himſelfe on each ſide in full view to all people, and made this ſhort ſpeech, with as much alacrity of Spirit, as a mortall man cou'd expreſſe, *viz.*

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The Earle of Straffords laſt ſpeech on the Scaffold, and the manner how he ſhewed himſelfe and ſpake to the people.

MY Lord Primate of *Ireland*, (and my Lords, and the reſt of theſe Gentlemen) it is a very great comfort for me to have your Lordſhip by me this day, in regard I have been knowne to you a long time, I ſhould be very glad to obtaine ſo much ſilence, as to bee heard a few words, but I doubt I ſh ll not, my Lord. I come hither by the good will nd pleaſure of Almightie God to pay that laſt debt I owe unto ſin, hich is death, and by the bleſſing of that God to riſe again through e merits of Chriſt Jeſus to eternall glorie. And hee being diurbed by the people, hee ſaid, *What is the m tter?* and ſate downe a chaire: ſome replyed, The Souldiers kept moſt ſtir: *If they*, ſaid *would be quiet, all the reſt would be quiet.* I wiſh I had been pri-

vate, that I might have beene heard, my Lord, if I might be so much beholding to you, that I might use a few words, I should take it for a very great courtesie: my Lord, I come hither to submit to that judgement which hath past against me, I doe it with a very quiet and contented minde, *I* doe freely forgive all the world, a forgiveneſſe that is not ſpoken from the teeth outward (as they ſay) but from the heart; *I* ſpeake it in the preſence of Almightie God, before whom *I* ſtand, that there is not ſo much as a diſpleaſing thought in me ariſing to any creature, I thank God, I may ſay truly, and my conſcience beares mee witneſſe, that in all my ſervices, ſince I have had the honour to ſerve his Majeſtie in any employment, *I* never had any thing in my heart, but the joynt and individuall proſperitie of King and people; if it have beene my hap to be miſconſtrued, it is the common proportion of us all, while we are in this life, the righteous judgement is hereafter; here we are ſubject to errour and apt to bee miſ judged one of another; there is one thing I deſire to cleere my ſelfe of, and I am verie confident, I ſpeake it with ſo much clearneſſe, that I hope I ſhall have your Chriſtian charitie in the beleefe of it, I did alwayes ever thinke the Parliaments of England, were the happieſt Conſtitutions, that any Kingdome, or any Nation lived under, and under God the meanes of making King and people happie, ſo far have I beene from being againſt Parliaments; for my death I here acquit all the world, and pray God heartily to forgive them: and in particular, my Lord Primate, *I* am verie glad that his Majeſtie is pleaſed to conceive mee, not meriting ſo ſevere and heavie a puniſhment as the utmoſt execution of this ſentence; *I* am verie glad, and infinitely rejoyce in this mercie of his, & beſeech God to turne it to him, that hee may finde mercy when he hath moſt need of it; I wiſh this Kingdome all the proſperity and happineſſe in the world: I did it living, and now dying it is my wiſh, I doe now profeſſe it from my heart, and do moſt humbly recommend it unto every man here, and with every man to lay his hand upon his heart, and conſider ſeriouſly whither the beginning of the happineſſe of a people ſhould be written in letters of blood, I feare you are in a wrong way, and I deſire Almighty God that no one drop of my blood may riſe up in judgment againſt you.

My Lord of *Armagh*, I profeſſe my ſelfe a Proteſtant, and a true and obedient Son to the *Church* of *England*, to that *Church* wherein I was borne and wherein I was bred; *proſperity and happineſſe be ever*

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to it: and whereas it hath beene sayd that I have enclin'd to *Popery*, if it be an objection worth answering, let me say truly, that from the time since I was one and twenty yeares of age, till this houre, now going upon nine & forty, I never had thought in my heart, to doubt of the truth of my *Religion*, nor to my best memory durst any ever profer it any kind whatsoever; and so being reconciled to the mercies of *Christ Iesus* my *Saviour*, into *whose bosome I hope shortly to bee gathered, to enjoy those eternall happinesses that shall never have end.* I desire hartily the forgiveneſse of every man, both for any rash or unadvised word or deed, and desire your prayers; *And so my Lords farwel, farwell all things of this world. Lord strengthen my faith; give me confidence and assurance in the merits of* Christ Iesus. *I desire you that you would be silent, and joyne in Prayers with me, and for me; and I trust in* God *that we shall all meet, and live eternally in Heaven, there to receive the accomplishment of all happines, where every teare shall bee wiped from our eyes, and every sad thought from our hearts: And so God blesse this* Kingdom, *and* Iesus *have mercy upon my Soule.*

FINIS.

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